

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
**Office of the Chief of Naval Operations**  
**2000 Navy Pentagon**  
**Washington DC 20350-2000**

**CH-1 of 20 Oct 1995**  
**OPNAVINST 1412.3E**  
**N869**  
**30 September 1993**

**OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1412.3E**

**From: Chief of Naval Operations**  
**To: All Ships and Stations (less Marine Corps field addressees not having Navy personnel attached)**

**Subj: SURFACE WARFARE (111X) AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS (114X) OFFICER REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMAND OF SURFACE SHIPS**

**Encl: (1) Command Qualification Record**  
**(2) Sample Nominating Letter**

**1. Purpose.** To revise and reissue the standards to be achieved and the procedures to be followed by Surface Warfare Officers (111X) and Special Operations Officers (114X) to obtain the designation "Qualified for Command." The designation is required for Surface Warfare and Special Operations Officers (commander and captain) assuming command of surface ships.

**2. Cancellation.** OPNAVINST 1412.3D.

**3. Discussion.** Command of a surface ship is a challenging assignment which places upon the officer in command extraordinary demands for manifesting professional skills in seamanship, tactics and resource management, and evidencing judgment, endurance and leadership. It is important that these abilities be judged at the correct time in an officer's career. Every Surface Warfare and Special Operations Officer may not be able to attain the designation "Qualified for Command." Qualifications must be limited to those officers who have met the requirements and who, by their outstanding performance, have clearly demonstrated their potential for command. Surface Warfare and Special Operations Officers must complete designation as "Qualified for Command" prior to completion of their executive officer tour.

The requirement for successful completion of the oral board and requirement for successful completion of written exams, administered in the Prospective Executive Officer (PXO) course remains, prior to R) designation as "Qualified for Command." All

command qualification designations awarded prior to the date of this instruction are considered effective.

**4. Standards.** The following standards are prescribed for officers pursuing the designation "Qualified for Command."

**a.** The following are basic eligibility requirements:

(1) Attain formal designation as a Surface Warfare Officer (111X) or Special Operations Officer (114X).

(2) Attain the watch station qualifications of Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW) and Tactical Action Officer (TAO). The qualifications may be attained in any type of commissioned ship (Note: Non-nuclear trained officers assigned to nuclear powered ships may complete the Certification Card for Non-Nuclear Trained Personnel to meet the EOOW criteria for command qualification).

(3) Serve at least 60 months in a ship or afloat staff, at least 36 months of which shall have been in a commissioned ship, and will include at least one tour in a lieutenant department head (or equivalent) billet. Lateral transfers from other warfare specialty communities accepted for change of designator to 111X or 114X shall serve a minimum of 24 months in a commissioned surface ship subsequent to acceptance for change of designator and shall have completed a total of 60 months duty in a ship or afloat staff. Lateral transfers are also required to complete at least one tour in a lieutenant department head (or equivalent) billet.

**b.** The following specific eligibility requirements must be attained at the rank of lieutenant commander (selection for lieutenant commander satisfies) or senior:

(1) While assigned afloat, demonstrate sustained skill in shiphandling, seamanship and task force operations by satisfactorily completing a shiphandling/seamanship examination as set forth in subparagraph 5.b.

R) (2) Satisfactorily complete the Surface Warfare Officer PXO Course. "Satisfactory completion" is defined as having successfully passed the written tests associated with each module of the PXO curriculum.

(3) While assigned to a ship or afloat precommissioning (PRECOM) unit, serve with consistently outstanding performance in a lieutenant commander or commander executive officer (XO) billet. Demonstrate qualities of professional competence, leadership, endurance, and high personal and ethical character to the degree that the commanding officer is willing to allow the candidate to take command of a ship under his/her command with complete confidence, should circumstances so require. By nominating an officer for qualification, commanding officers will have attested to the officer's satisfaction of these paramount requirements.

**5. Procedures.** The following procedures are prescribed for officers pursuing designation "Qualified for Command."

a. Maintain an individual Command Qualification Record (enclosure (1)).

b. Complete a shiphandling and seamanship examination which will consist, as a minimum, of the following evolutions:

(1) Mooring to and getting underway from a pier or a nest of ships alongside a pier.

(2) Anchoring and getting underway from an anchorage.

(3) Maneuvering through restricted waters entering or leaving port.

(4) Maneuvering the ship to recover a simulated man overboard.

(5) Replenishing at sea. Minimum requirements include an approach, remaining alongside long enough to evidence the ability to make common station-keeping adjustment, knowledge of emergency breakaway procedures, and departure from alongside.

(6) Executing any evolution considered unique to the type of ship in which qualification will be achieved (marrying causeways, towing, launching landing craft, streaming minesweeping gear, etc.).

c. Candidates will be nominated while serving afloat.

(1) An officer from a surface force ship will be nominated to a command qualification board within his/her command's chain of command which has been established in accordance with paragraph 6. If, by reason of deployment, remote homeporting, or similar circumstances, a qualification board within the chain of command is not available, the candidate's commanding officer or unit commander may nominate the officer to any established surface force command qualification board, stating the reason for the variance in the nominating letter.

(2) An officer attached to a ship which is not assigned to a Surface Force Type Commander will be nominated by his/her commanding officer or unit commander to the geographically closest Surface Force Type Commander requesting a command qualification board be designated to conduct the formal interview.

d. The nomination letter must include the following (enclosure (2) is a sample nominating letter):

(1) Certification that candidate meets all eligibility requirements. Include as an enclosure the candidate's Command Qualification Record (enclosure (1)).

(2) Indication of the period during which the candidate will be available for the command qualification board interview.

e. Surface Warfare or Special Operations Officers who have successfully completed a lieutenant or lieutenant commander surface ship command and completed the basic eligibility requirements of this instruction, may request command qualification via their ship's chain of command, from the appropriate Surface Force Type Commander.

**6. Command Qualification Boards.** The establishment of command qualification boards within each squadron and appropriate groups of the naval surface force is mandatory. Boards will be composed of one or more captains and/or commanders (111X/114X) who are in command or who have commanded surface ships within the previous 3 years. In that sense, "command" includes any surface force ship, squadron, or group. Normally, the squadron commander shall be chairman. However, under (R)

extraordinary circumstances, chairmanship may be delegated to the next senior member. The appropriate group commander may delegate the authority to convene command qualification boards to immediate subordinate commanding officers in the grade of captain. The chair of the boards, convened by the appropriate group commanders, may be delegated to a qualified captain within the staff. All members of the board shall be senior to the candidate and no member of the board shall be from the same individual command as the candidate.

a. Upon receipt of a nomination completed per subparagraph 5d, the board will convene at a time and place mutually convenient to the board and the candidate. Subject areas for the interview are at the discretion of the chairperson. The following general guidelines are provided:

(1) Interview should be approximately 1 hour in duration.

(2) The board should not dwell on technical aspects which have been covered by previous qualifications and training. Rather, the interview should be oriented to evaluate the candidate's maturity, judgment, attitude, motivation and awareness.

b. Upon completion of its deliberations the command qualification board shall report its proceedings as follows:

(1) For officers found qualified, a letter setting forth the findings of the board will be sent to the candidate via the appropriate Surface Force Type Commander, copy to the nominating officer and Chief of Naval Personnel (CHNAVPERS) (PERS-41). The nominating officer's letter of recommendation, including enclosure, will be forwarded as part of the board's report.

(2) For officers found not qualified, a report setting forth the board's findings, the reasons therefore, and, if appropriate, a recommended date for reinterview will be forwarded to the nominating command, copy to the candidate and the command which established the qualification board.

c. Recognition of achievement of the designation "Qualified for Command" will be accomplished as follows:

(1) A letter of qualification will be issued by the appropriate Surface Force Type Commander in recognition of the accomplishment and shall be delivered to the officer in an appropriate ceremony.

(2) Relevant comments concerning the qualification shall be made in the officer's next regular report of fitness.

d. Upon receipt of a successful qualification board report, CHNAVPERS (PERS-41) will ensure the appropriate entry in the candidate's official record.

7. **Exceptions.** Exceptions to command qualification procedures prescribed in this instruction may be granted only by the Surface Force Type Commanders and must be at the request of the individual officer. Full documentation as to why the procedures could not be met must be provided.

8. **Review.** As principal advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations on Surface Warfare matters, the Director, Surface Warfare Division (N86) is charged with the responsibility for periodic review and updating of the contents of this instruction.

9. **Report.** The reporting requirements contained in this instruction are exempt from reports controlled by SECNAVINST 5214.2B.

P. M. QUAST  
Director, Surface Warfare Division  
(OPNAV N86)

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**OPNAVINST 1412.3E**

**30 September 1993**

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COMMAND QUALIFICATION RECORD

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. All officers must complete the following items prior to nomination for command qualification by their commanding officers.

(a) Complete watch station qualification as Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

(b) Complete watch station qualification as Tactical Action Officer (TAO).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

(c) Complete required minimum time in afloat tours.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

(d) Complete the Surface Warfare Prospective Executive Officer Course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

(e) Successfully demonstrate sustained skill in shiphandling, seamanship and task force operations by completing a shiphandling and seamanship examination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

(f) Attain the recommendation for command qualification designation from an afloat commanding officer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

The candidate is responsible to initiate and maintain this record throughout the command qualification process. This record must be an enclosure in the nomination letter.

Enclosure (1)

OPNAVIST 1412.3E  
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DATE

**SAMPLE NOMINATING LETTER**

From: (Nominating Officer)  
To: Squadron/Group Commander

Subj: NOMINATION FOR COMMAND QUALIFICATION DESIGNATION OF  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 1412.3E

Encl: (1) Command Qualification Record

1. Under the provisions of reference (a), (name) is nominated for designation as "Qualified for Command." Request a command qualification board be designated to conduct the formal interview. (Name) is available for interview  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ (NAME) \_\_\_\_\_ meets the eligibility and prerequisite requirements of reference (a) as recorded in enclosure (1).

3. (Additional Comments)

4. Point of contact for command qualification board coordination:

Copy to:

Nominated Officer

Enclosure (2)